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C.I.A. Says Lon Nol Sold Reds Rice

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A report of the Central Intelligence Agency asserts that Premier Lon Nol of Cambodia, who led the ouster of Prince Norodom Sihanouk as Chief of State in March, sold rice to the Vietcong on several occasions a few years ago.

Reliable sources say that an intelligence document prepared to inform high American officials on Cambodia reports that General Lon Nol, who is now anti-Communist, sold the rice at a time when Cambodia was formally neutralist and, at the same time, was allowing the North Vietnamese to use her territory as a staging area for attacks on American and South Vietnamese forces in Vietnam.

The C.I.A. report, apparently prepared in 1967, said that Vietcong representatives stopped buying from the General when they came to distrust him. It did not say what had prompted the distrust.

The sources could not say what Government position

General Lon Nol held when

he was engaged in the reported transactions with the Vietcong. He was made commander in chief of the armed forces in 1960, Deputy Premier in 1963 and Premier in 1966.

There have also been frequent reports from intelligence sources and Cambodian officials that members of Prince Sihanouk's family, including his wife, Monique, were heavily involved in smuggling operations. This is thought to have been one of the factors that caused dissatisfaction against the Prince and led to the coup d'état in which he was ousted.

While confirming the report about General Lon Nol, some sources pointed out that since Cambodia was neutralist at the time, there was nothing illegal in his actions. One official added: "You have to put this in the Asian context. These are pragmatic people, this is a pragmatic guy."

CPYRGHT